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The Musical Mainstream

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Announcements

Texaco-Metropolitan Opera Radio Broadcasts: 1986–1987 Season

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NLS Librettos in Braille: Met Broadcast Season

January

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Rigoletto, English and Italian BRM 24629 and BRM 26051

Madama Butterfly, English and Italian BRM 22369

February

Le Nozze di Figaro, English BRM 24758

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March

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Boris Godunov, English and Italian BRM 24776

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Selected Reprints

Reminiscences of Black Musicians

by James A. Standifer
American Music
Summer 1986

Oral history, as a means of documenting culture, is a popular and widely accepted form of social research in the United States today. This is especially true of black culture in America and of black musicians, whose music—spirituals, gospels, blues, and jazz—is both uniquely American and a unique synthesis of the Afro-American heritage and experience.

The oral history interviews presented below were selected from more than 150 hours of videotaped conversations with thirty-five prominent black musicians who have helped create and expand black music and culture. The texts have been excerpted from a slightly edited transcript of a forty-seven minute television program entitled "An Oral History of Black Music as Told by Those Who Lived It," produced at the University of Michigan Media Resource Center. It was developed as part of the final report documenting results of a research project devoted to interviews with prominent musicians. Support for the total project was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and by the following divisions of the University of Michigan: the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, the Institute of Gerontology, and the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching.

In all, seventeen individuals responded to questions in the program. Ten of these participants, representing three more-or-less distinct branches of the music profession, are presented below. They are: singer and actress Etta Moten and opera singers Todd Duncan and Anne Brown; jazz artists Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Mary Lou Williams, Freddie Green, and Count Basie; and composer-musicians Thomas Dorsey, Undine Moore, and Eva Jessye. Responding to individualized questions, posed over a period of six years, the participants in this program discussed a wide range of topics. Included are personal reminiscences on the difficulties faced in getting started and reflections on important early influences, associations, and personal achievements. Some participants were asked to offer advice to young musicians, others to provide self-assessments of their contributions. Some of the musicians appraise the impact of their so-called African heritage, and others offer comments on fellow artists and on specific pieces with which they have been associated. In sum these men and women recall for us the early

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James A. Standifer is the former chairman of music education at the University of Michigan and is currently professor of music and director of the Eva Jessye Collection of Afro-American Music at the Ann Arbor campus. Copyright 1986 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Used with permission.

years of struggle as well as the many changes that have taken place in the course of the twentieth century. They look back on their experiences with the wisdom of age, and they document, in a very personal way, what it is like to be black and a musician in America.

Standifer: Ms. Moten, was being poor in the United States in the early days more difficult than being poor in America today?

Etta Moten (interviewed on October 13, 1977, in a classroom at the University of Michigan, School of Music): As I look back on it, I didn't consider myself poor. I probably had less than somebody else, but I knew I had so much more of something than they had. So I felt just marvelous because I thought I was great. I had one dress for each season. People would say, "How nice you sing, now nicely you speak." . . . But that was the way things were done then. But now we have these "Ghettocrats." These people who make a business of being poor and telling a poor-mouth story. We had too much pride for that. And you just didn't think about it as being something that you related to and grumble about. Only when you look back on it. Oh, gee! I don't know or see how we made it. But we weren't unhappy. I just didn't know I was poor.

Standifer: You're widely known as a singer, actress, and speaker. How did you acquire these skills?

Moten: My mama was a polished young woman who had a great deal to say to us about speaking properly. She had a thing about the English language. Partly because I evidently had this ear for speech and for sound. So, when we traveled around—papa was a minister—we would go over to certain areas, and I would play with the little kids and would come back "talking something like this," not eloquent to say the least. Mama would give me the business for speaking improperly. You had to really speak correctly around her. You never could get in a "speech bad habit" or pick up the habits of kids you played around with. So, you see, this ear for speech has made me. Mama was always pushing me; . . . she could cut you in two with a glance. So, you would straighten up and speak correctly. No words were needed. Sometimes she would correct you by saying things like: "Doesn't the end of that word have a *t* on it?" "Can't you cross that *t* with your speech?" This kind of thing, a respect for the language, no doubt about it! So, then, of course, in the study of voice, I began early to appreciate that good diction is important. I was always reminded that if you can't understand some people, if they always sounded like they were singing or speaking in a foreign language when they were really speaking or singing in English, there's a problem. According to mama, if you are speaking English and folks are supposed to understand you, they should understand you without trying to translate! Eventually, I went to Northwestern University, to the School of Speech. I went there in summers after I was well into

my career. In fact, I was there even after I came out of *Porgy and Bess.* Such study kept me forever aware of the necessity for good diction . . d . uch awareness and care has lasted to this day.

Standifer: In your view, has Africa influenced black music and the things you do in the area?

Moten: I've come to realize that the Afro-American phenomenon is an American thing. The spirituals don't come from Africa. We might have the beat in us—which would go into the music we sing, like it does sometimes with the music of black composers. For example, we hear this in the music of Margaret Bond or in the work of Nathaniel Dett. His "Juba Dance" is pure Afro-American as far as I am concerned, but the African influence is unmistakable. Music by black composers such as these without a doubt contains recollections of the African thing. But spirituals, to answer your question more specifically, are a phenomenon which grew out of the black experiences here in this country. You know this. Unfortunately, I had to go to Africa to find this out. And when I went to Brazil, I found they had the same kind of thing going on there with the transplanted blacks. It was music developed there as a result of experiences there in that country. Again, the African influence, however, was and is unmistakable. But, as with our spirituals here in this country, their sorrow songs (like our sorrow songs—the spiritual) came out of their own experience of slavery. In Brazil and in South America, in general, the black experience is unique because of this, not simply because of the African heritage. True. . . . in Africa, when you hear those people sing and dance, it's about triumphs, wars with each other, the glory of chiefdom, the glory of a baby being born, the glory of a baptism, the adoring of a child or new crop, the thing about the life that they lived. It has nothing to do with slavery or the sorrow of being despised and "buked." Instead, it is the Afro-American service woman and servant man, the blues, the Juba dances, the jubilees and the jubilee songs, the ragtime, all the jazz, and the gospel music—all of this. The African that is in it is the African that is in us. That is how I feel about the entire question of African influence on blacks and black music.

Standifer: Ms. Brown, what advice would you give the young musician?

Anne Brown (interviewed on October 9, 1980, in her home in Oslo, Norway): I would say, "If you are going to be a musician, be a real one." But how many young singers and artists of today are doing that? If there are many, all I can say is to keep on. You know, I have sung a Negro spiritual many times called "Hold On." Hold on and don't let anybody or anything stop you. Retain your integrity as a human being and as an artist and let the chips fall where they may.

Standifer: Is it good enough to be good, especially as a singer in the classical music world, where there are

pianists and singers who are a dime a dozen, so to speak, all trying to get the big break?

Brown: Is it good enough to be good? Well——.

Standifer: Or, better still, is it good enough to even be superior?

Brown: When I was young we used to hear the expression very often, "Enough is never sufficient; you must be very good!" There are . . . really, really great artists. The trend today is to do your thing as well as you can and don't bother about the rest being good and maybe compromising a few principles along the way. That's not my idea. I suppose I'm old fashioned. I don't know, but surely you must give everything you've got if you're going to be an artist and have real greatness as your goal. If you don't reach your goal, you may come nearer to it than if you had just worked hard at your career or thought in terms of the usual or ordinary view about a career. Sure, reach for the stars. But be able to accept what you finally get. And let me emphasize that it's much easier to accept whatever you get (and yourself) if your principles are intact! The point I think is to do all you can, and as much as you can, without compromising your principles. You must remember, you must be able to accept yourself first and always.

Standifer: Would you share with us aspects of your initial associations with George Gershwin and his writing and casting of *Porgy and Bess?*

Brown: I think that it is rather interesting to know that I had the opportunity and honor of following the writing of this opera, *Porgy and Bess,* from near the beginning right to the finish. I used to go down to George Gershwin's apartment—a wonderful duplex apartment—and sing all the different roles as he wrote them. I would sing the various parts—those for Sportin' Life, for Porgy, for Maria and Clara, for Serena, and parts intended for other performers as well as Bess's music. As fast as he wrote it, he would telephone and say, "Come down, I want you to sing something." I'd go down and sing it, and he sang with me, especially the duet roles. He would play the melody first for me and sing it over, and then we sang it two or three times, and then, if requested, he would sing the other parts he had written.

Standifer: What motivated you to take the role of Bess so early in your career?

Brown: I always loved music, but I think that I really wanted to be an actress because I loved the theater a bit more. I love the theater in music; I love the music purely abstract. Also, I love everything that music does to you and for you and what you experience when you are listening to music. But I love the drama in and of itself. I think that when I was very small I wanted to be an actress. But when I discovered what sort of roles a black woman would have to play at that time in America, I just forgot it and decided actually that I would like to be an opera singer.

Standifer: Mr. Duncan, how did you be-

come acquainted with George Gershwin?

Todd Duncan (interviewed on February 20, 1980, in his studio and home in Washington, D.C.): The composer called and said, "This is George Gershwin, and I have been told about you and your talent, that you are a wonderful singer. I would like to hear you sing." I said that I could only come on Sundays because I teach school. He said, "Yes, you're at the university, aren't you?" He then said, "Well, could you come this following Sunday?" I said, "No, I'm singing this Sunday." "The next Sunday then," he said. I said, "I would be pleased," and I went.

Standifer: What events led to you eventually accepting the role of Porgy?

Duncan: George Gershwin all that year had been traveling and had gone . . . far . . . down South; . . . and according to him he had auditioned more than 100 baritones. But he couldn't find what he wanted. So I went, and I sang. I sang just one song, one third of a song, in fact. The paradox is that I sang an old Italian song, "Lungi del caro bene," by Secchi. Now I say paradox because here was a Negro singing for a Jew and singing an old Italian aria of the eighteenth century, auditioning for an opera whose site was to be in South Carolina. So that is paradoxical. He used to love to tell the story because he said that every Negro that would sing for him would sing some Negro spiritual (e.g., "Deep River," "Glory Road") or the famous tune "Old Man River." He said here comes this Negro singing an old Italian aria and a very classical (not even Verdi or Puccini but a very classical aria) selection displaying his repertoire without flaunting his race or background. I sang about ten bars, and he was pulling for me. He said, "You stand right in front of me; I want to look into your face as you sing. Would you sing that again?" I said, "Yes," and I looked right at him, without blinking, while singing, and he looked at me and said, "Would you be my Porgy? You are exactly what I want."

Standifer: What are your views regarding the late Paul Robeson and the Communist thing?

Duncan: I could never be a Communist. But I can understand Paul Robeson, whose objective was that of seeking the truth for himself. He wanted to go somewhere he would not be a second-class citizen. He was seeking the truth.

Standifer: But some people said at that time that such action might have been a cop-out. You stayed and fought the racial battle while he left.

Duncan: I don't agree with that. He kept fighting 'til he died.

Standifer: Why didn't you or some of his peers follow the same route that he did?

Duncan: I can only speak for myself. That is not my way. I don't think you should take music and make it a political force. I think music, true music, true performance, transcends the new blackness, whiteness, Jewishness, Christianness, being Catholic or Baptist. Real music, real performance, real talent, transcend all of these man-made

"isms." I cannot pervert my music, my talent, my performance, and my singing with man-made prejudices and narrow, insular thoughts. If I do, my music is not real for me.

Standifer: Ms. Williams, teaching jazz in the schools and colleges is becoming a popular thing now. Do you feel that jazz should and can be taught in school and from books? How do you do it here at Duke University and at other schools when you travel?

Mary Lou Williams (interviewed on October 17–18, 1980, at her home in Durham, N.C.): Yes, it can be taught effectively if done by a sensitive and knowledgeable musician who really knows and has lived the styles. As I said earlier, blues and most of the black pop music has lost the feeling of the old and early days of jazz and blues. I can play the old-fashioned blues to give you the feeling I mean and show you other things that are modern but still are the blues. But what I will do will have only the old-fashioned blues feeling. It doesn't have to have eight bars, twelve bars, or anything like that. It does have to have the feeling though. . . .

Standifer: How do you feel about Africa and African influence on black music, on your music and style of performance?

Williams: I think Africa laid a bomb on us! After all. We're black American, not African.

Standifer: Can we separate what we do artistically from what our African ancestors gave us?

Williams: Artistically, they had nothing to do with what we are. What happened to us here in America had more influence on us artistically than what our ancestors from Africa passed on to us. I don't want to put people down. I love it all. I like Africans and the African in me. I like the dances and what not. But why should I kill off a great talent that has been produced in America. Many individuals in our racial group are advocating going back to Africa either in behavior or in reality. But why should I kill off a great talent that has been produced in America and leave it and go to another country—in whatever way? It's here, and what's here is what made us, what made me what I am. Not in Africa!

Standifer: Mr. Eldridge, how did you get the name "Little Jazz?"

Roy Eldridge (interviewed on May 19, 1980, in a Manhattan hotel): That came back in 1931. I was working at Small's Paradise with Elmer Snowden's band. There was a first-alto player named Otto Hardwick (he used to play with Duke Ellington), and he watched me closely while I played all over the place. I was a small kid then. I must have weighed about 122 pounds (looking at me now you'd never think that was possible). Anyway, I used to play all the time. Even when the band had finished, I'd continue playing, on- or offstage, around the men's room, in the dressing room, anywhere I could! Finally, one night, Otto Hardwick said, "Man, you play so much I'm going to name you

'Little Jazz' because you are always playing." After that, the name stuck, and it's been that to this day.

Standifer: Who were some of your strongest influences in music?

Eldridge: Probably Red Nichols and Rex Stewart. Rex Stewart played fast. The reputation I got regarding the speed with which I played is probably due to the great admiration I had for Rex.

Standifer: Why is it that so many people mention that your style of trumpet playing is very much like that of a saxophone player?

Eldridge: Well, my brother, who also influenced my playing, plays saxophone. He's a hell of a musician. [In] my first gig, which was a carnival that traveled the circuit (TOBA), I played the saxophone choruses. I was the only trumpet that played it. I was only about fourteen at the time. I did my best to imitate the sax sound. I couldn't read then, but I had such a fantastic ear I could play anything I heard from classical music to the toughest jazz tune. The older players suspected I couldn't read and were forever trying to trip me up.

Standifer: Dizzy, are you satisfied with the responses of the people for whom you perform? Do they really understand what you try to say?

Dizzy Gillespie (interviewed on March 29, 1980, between performances at Billie's Pub in the Park Palace Hotel Gambling Casino, Atlantic City, New Jersey): You would have a percentage of people that know what you are doing when you are in performance. So you are really happy that they are there. Most of the time you are playing for people that don't know anything about music. What you hope for is to reach rapport with them on their level. This is often difficult to do and still do what is musically you and what is really artistic.

Standifer: Then do you try to hit the listener on a purely emotional level?

Gillespie: I don't know what level that is, but I guess I do try to reach them on a level that makes them feel, and feel deeply, despite not knowing exactly what I am doing and how I am doing it. Let's face it, these are not musicians I am performing for in most situations. They are average people who love music, especially jazz. But if they are at least feeling something because of what it is that I am doing, then bravo! After all, that's what they are supposed to get out of it, as far as I am concerned. In my business I desperately want to give them what they pay for, and more. When I succeed in this, I am satisfied.

Standifer: Mr. Green, you've become something of a tradition with the Count Basie band. Tell us about that and about your impressions of performing here at Interlochen.

Freddie Green (interviewed in May 1974, backstage following a performance at the International Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan): Well, as you know, I've been with Basie since 1937; I've been very happy to be part of his band. I feel that it has contributed a great deal to American jazz. Over the years we've seen quite a bit happen to

American jazz, and we were involved in some of these happenings. As far as this place is concerned, I am really amazed at what is happening here. I can't express my excitement at seeing so many young people that really take to music—all kinds of music. I really hope that they will continue to do their best for the arts, and I am sure when Mr. Basie talks with you he will support what I am saying.

Standifer: How did you get your start in jazz?

Green: Well, I really liked music in my hometown of Charleston, South Carolina. My earliest memory of jazz is when I heard it played by orphans from the orphanage in Charleston called Jenkins Orphanage. They had some fine musicians, just young kids playing horns. I think they had about four or five bands, and they used to go around the town and play on corners. Whatever I was doing I would stop and go follow them. They used to play on one corner for ten or fifteen minutes, and then they would go to another corner and play. I would follow them right out of my neighborhood. I listened long and hard to those kids improvise. They made a lasting impression on me that influences me to this very day.

Standifer: Mr. Basie, what do you feel is your contribution to American music? People have written all kinds of things about you. Tell us in your own words what you think is your contribution to music.

Count Basie (interviewed in May 1974, backstage following a performance at the International Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan): Oh, I don't know. I don't think that I have contributed anything. I believe I play what I want to play, but I don't think I really have contributed anything worthwhile. But you know, I'm just very happy to have been along with some of the great swingers in the business and that I have met a lot of people who have been very nice to me. Actually, I was never very close to the real main swingers. One of the great ones that I was very close to was Edward "Duke" Ellington. We were real tight. Also, Fletcher Henderson and the great Tommy Dorsey and Jimmy Lunceford. All these guys and I were tight way back there.

Standifer: To whom do you credit your style of piano playing?

Basie: Well, I think, no, I know it was Fats Waller. That was my man. If I have any sort of style at all, it came from Fats.

Standifer: Ms. Moore, what motivated you to arrange spirituals and other music you've dedicated your life to? Also, would you describe your music as "black music?"

Undine Moore (interviewed on May 14, 1980, at her home in Etrick, Virginia): I do remember that I was very much touched by the rich amount of music of the black church and the singing of spirituals that went on in my home. My mother was not a singer and would have been horrified if she thought anybody was going to listen to her. But,

nevertheless, she sang all the time around the house. I loved this music, and, of course, I loved this music well into my college days at Fisk University. After I had taken my master's degree I began, for no reason that I was able to talk about particularly, to write down and transcribe the melodies that my mother sang. I did not have any idea . . . what use I would make of them. But, almost like a revelation one day, I had the thought: "Why are you writing all this 'Goldovsky' sounding music?" "Is it you and what you are really about?" "Why don't you write what you know?" And from that point on I became very heavily involved in writing music that was black derived, and many of the pieces were spiritual arrangements. I do not mean in the whole course of my life that that was all I would write. I think that to be a musician, to have access to the music of all time (as I think . . . a black person has in America—as much as anyone else) is to be an American musician. So I have written in a variety of ways as an American. I hope that everything that I have written reflects my blackness. I cannot say, but I hope so.

Standifer: Mr. Dorsey, what exactly is the story behind the famous gospel tune "Precious Lord, Take My Hand?"

Thomas Dorsey (interviewed on May 13, 1980, at his home in Chicago): It is not a long story. My wife at the time, Lilly Harper Dorsey, was going to become a mother. I was out on the road with a show, and I was going to be the happiest man in the world when I came back. But one night—I forget the town we were playing—I received a telegram that said, "Your wife just died, hurry home." (Oh yes, we were in St. Louis.) My first thought was unusual. I felt, "What can I do there?" Then I almost fell off my feet. Remember, I was just a naive young man. Luckily there was a young friend of mine who had a car, and he got it together and said, "Come on, I'll take you to Chicago." He did. When we got there it was the next morning, and I ran in. (I was living on Fortieth Street; I had my music place and everything there.) "Mamie" (they called her that), "Mamie's dead." Well, there was no chance for me to cry, but I said "Where is she?" But they wouldn't let me see her right then. And I never got a chance to see her until two or three days later. But there was a fine-looking baby there, a lovely looking baby trying to cry or something. I thanked God for that baby. But that night the baby died. I didn't feel like cursing God, but I came pretty near at that moment. That was the end of my family.

Dr. Clayton Hannah (Mr. Dorsey's biographer, who was present at the Dorsey interview): "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" exists in many translated versions . . . available all over the world. It is the only gospel song translated into over twenty languages. Royalties come in from all over the world for that song. Incidentally, Mr. Dorsey's "There Will Be Peace in the Valley," made so popular by Red Foley, is also widely known. So, "Precious

Lord" is a song written out of despair. The man was heartbroken and weary, but you see, we don't know what the Lord has in mind for us. But from out of this agony, Mr. Dorsey wrote a song that brought consolence to himself and to the world. It is one of the most widely known religious songs in existence today!

Dorsey: I have been thrown out of some of the best churches in America because of my gospel music. But they just didn't understand, especially the preachers. They thought that gospel was going to become a great commercial unchristian thing. They were also a bit intimidated by the quick popularity of it. They knew that a gospel song is nothing more than the sermon's message put to musical accompaniment. And it involves more people. It actively involves people in a way that is infectious. This intimidated preachers, and many of them made it very difficult for me to work in their churches. Sometimes I was asked not to return. Other times I was simply not invited. This, as you know, finally changed, and gospel music became very much a part of many black church services.

I was interested in making money for the church, of course, but not in it becoming an all-consuming project. My main reason was to get more people involved with the message of God. As time went on I explained this to them (the preachers), and we had fewer and fewer difficulties. I've put on programs of gospel music at those same churches that were very hostile to me at first. As time went on they sent back time and time again to get me to do things. They began to have an understanding of what gospel music meant: that gospel music was just the message of God, like that given by the preacher [but] put into the form of a special style of music involving everybody! I didn't put on airs or anything like that, 'cause people are funny about things like that and about new things they don't understand, especially things that intimidate or make the leaders feel uncomfortable or threatened (especially the black preacher who is king in his church and who knows instinctively that gospel music is just a step away from what he does). (The preachers also felt that gospel music and song may do it a bit better than they are capable of doing it.) I just told it like it was; I meant them to take it if they could. If they couldn't or didn't want it, then leave it!

Standifer: Dr. Jessye, you're known internationally as the choral conductor and director of the 1935 premiere of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess,* as well as for other acts in the arts. What are some early experiences that influenced your work?

Dr. Eva Jessye (interviewed on April 4, 1974, in her Ann Arbor apartment and studio): I first determined to devote my life to our own music when I was thirteen years old, at Western University in Cordero, Kansas. The choirmaster there at the school was trying some students out singing some spirituals. In those days, as is true, too, in some

quarters these days, people thought that spirituals were reminiscent of our slavery days and were something to be avoided and viewed contemptuously. So when this teacher was trying to get someone to sing the brisk part of "My Lord, What a Morning," well he tried girls from California, he tried some from Colorado, and so on. And none would do. So he finally asked me to try, and, of course, I didn't know any better than to sing because my people had always sung it. And he said that was what he was looking for. But you know, many of the other students laughed in derision. I determined then and there that some day I would make this music more appreciated, and it has been my life's work ever since.

Standifer: Are black music and black musicians more appreciated nowadays than when you were younger?

Jessye: At a recent blues festival here in Ann Arbor, I saw . . . thousands of young people, black and white, and so largely white, enthusiastic, and admiring the singers of the blues. Some of the singers were illiterates but very wise and very knowing of their art. I noticed those thousands applauding and sitting entranced and applauding, and I thought of the years back there when blues originated, when it was considered "darky" music and something done by "ignorant" people who didn't know enough to sing the music right. They didn't know that we were just so inventive that we always wanted to do things our way. So we say we did it "our way." It has been a wonderful change and is a wonderful time for living.

Standifer: What is the cultural importance of the arts and how have black musicians contributed?

Jessye: Well, I was thinking, if anything is going to bring this world together, nation to nation, it is going to be music. It is going to be the arts and the powerful influence they have on the lives of mankind. Nothing else will accomplish it. Nothing. Because nothing except the arts will reach down to the souls of people, all kinds of people. The arts cannot be governed by money or politics. The . . . process [of art] can't be a matter of self-praise or that of one government excelling the other or subjugating the other. The arts have great and inestimable potential here because art is a communication of the spirit. We in the black American music community will help bring about the day when all individuals' feelings are influenced by art. We've done it in the past and will continue doing it through the unique ways we practice art!

The Hannover Boys Choir: The Surprise of Excellence

by Ted A. Gibboney
The American Organist
July 1986

The best music making always contains an element of the unexpected—the surprise—or so it seems. In Hannover, West Germany, a city better known for its trade fairs, lovely parks, and dialect-free German, the surprise comes in the form of a boys' choir, which is beginning to gain international recognition because of the high caliber of its music and the spontaneous freshness of its concert performances. There is more to this surprise, however, than meets the eye.

The Hannover Boys' Choir was founded in 1950 by the current conductor and organizational director, Heinz Hennig. It continues a long and distinguished choral tradition in Northern Germany that reaches back to the late Gothic era of the fifteenth century, when a boys' choir was a part of the Latin school in the bustling trade center of Hannover, then thriving with other Hanseatic trading centers of the day. A newspaper solicitation signaled the beginning of the choir in 1950, which soon outgrew its regional heritage, has since received criticial acclaim from Tokyo to Oslo, and currently carries on an exciting educational program, concert life, and recording projects.

In contrast to other world-class boy choirs, the Hannover Boys' Choir is not organized around a boarding school, but consists of an educational program and only two regular rehearsals each week. At the age of seven, the boys are auditioned and admitted into a preparatory class, which, in weekly meetings during the course of a year, teaches the fundamentals of singing, music theory, and notation. Following the first year, the best singers are admitted into the main choir. The education and participation continues for the boys after their voices change, as an advanced course studies the historical and theoretical aspects of the choir's repertoire, an ideal preparation for readmission to the choir as an adult. Including the preparatory course, the main choir, and the advanced course, today the organization has 190 members (150 boys, 40 men).

There is no particular secret to the educational curriculum, nor do the class teachers use a single choral method exclusively, such as Orff or Kodály; rather, the children are taught correct singing habits from their first day and are playfully drilled in the rhythmic, intervallic, and notational fundamentals of music. The faultless intonation and crystalline blend of the ensemble are also in large part due to the presence of the voice coach, Peter Sefcik, at each of the classes and rehearsals, whose infectious enthusiasm is as apparent as is his mastery of vocal technique and pedagogy.

The performances include monthly

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participation in local church services, concerts for the North German Radio, yearly concert tours, and recording projects. In recent years the concert tours have taken the choir to Japan, Israel, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and throughout Western Europe, while future plans include the Boston Schütz Festival in 1987. The repertoire is centered on the major works of Heinrich Schütz and J.S. Bach, but also draws on literature from the Renaissance to the present day, including commissioned works. Recordings appear under Harmonia Mundi, Harmonia Mundi France, Teldec, Camerata, Leuenhagan & Paris, and EMI Electrola labels. In 1985 the choir was awarded the *Deutsche Schallplattenpreis* for its recording of the *Geistliche Chormusik* (1648) of Schütz. Also notable is its participation with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, the King's College Choir, and the Tölz Boys' Choir in the Teldec series of the complete cantatas of Bach.

From the smallest organizational detail to the most arcane interpretive concept, the Hannover Boys' Choir is inspired by the presence of its founder and current director, Heinz Hennig. Professor Hennig (b. 1927) attended the short-lived educational experiment for musically gifted youngsters directed by Leo Kastenberg at the Frankfurt Gymnasium, where he was a soprano under Kurt Thomas. Following World War II he completed his diploma at the Hannover Hochschule für Music und Theater, where he now teaches choral conducting and serves as vice president. The long list of concert appearances, recordings, and awards attests to the musical standard he has attained, but one is impressed most by his emphasis on music as a means of education, the affable naturalness of his musicality, and the sheer joy of making good music which he instills in the choir members.

Perhaps the biggest surprise is something that cannot be explained, but that has everything to do with the concerts being sold out weeks in advance, the choir winning regional and international competitions, and the production of lovely recordings. It has to do with a sharing of goals between young and old, the importance and pride of each member, and the electricity of the performances, all of which add up to unexpected excellence in Hannover.

The Bi-Coastal Baton of Gerard Schwarz

by Herbert Kupferberg
Ovation
July 1986

"I led a double life in the New York Philharmonic," admits that orchestra's former co-principal trumpeter, Gerard Schwarz. "I played my trumpet as well as I could, but worked at conducting as well—studying scores, watching, observing. I decided to go for conducting almost at the same time I entered the orchestra."

Few musicians have switched careers with Schwarz's spectacular success. In the ten years since he gave up his first-chair seat with the Philharmonic, he has developed into one of America's most important and influential conductors, with home bases on both coasts—as director of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and of New York's Y Chamber Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival, and "Music Today" series—and a burgeoning list of recordings carrying his reputation far beyond. Martin E. Segal, former Chairman of Lincoln Center, has proclaimed, "He is going to be one of the greatest conductors of this century." Probably no other native-born American conductor has achieved so much in so short a time since Leonard Bernstein and James Levine took off along the musical fast track. And at the ripe old age of thirty-eight, Schwarz shows no signs of slowing down.

Indeed, he is conducting more than ever, is in the midst of a busy recording schedule with Delos International—a company specializing in compact discs—and has even added to his schedule an annual six-week European guest-conducting tour. Recently, however, Schwarz has shown signs of a certain consolidation of his activities, a maturing of musical outlook that seems likely to add a new element of interpretive depth to the already imposing breadth and range of his conductorial skills. A year or so ago he headed the musical affairs not only of his present four, but of two additonal enterprises—the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and New Jersey's summer Waterloo Festival (of which he remains Principal Guest Conductor).

Schwarz maintains apartments on New York's West Side and near Seattle's Puget Sound. Relaxing in his New York home, where he lives with his wife, the former Jody Greitzer (daughter of the retired principal violist of the New York Philharmonic, Sol Greitzer), Schwarz assesses the current direction of his career. "I'm beginning to look on myself as more of an old-fashioned conductor and less of the modern kind," says the handsome, personable Schwarz (who

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Herbert Kupferberg is the author of *Basically Bach* and *The Book of Classical Music Lists.* His *Amadeus: A Mozart Mosaic* has just been published by McGraw-Hill. Copyright 1986 by Classical Music Publications, Ltd. Used with permission.

recently restored his once relatively trim figure by losing thirty pounds in three months—"no desserts, and lots of fish, fresh fish out of Puget Sound"). "By that I mean I'm trying to put more emphasis on interpretation, and to stay with the same orchestra for an extended period."

Asked just how he would characterize the "modern" conductor, he responds, "Well, they tend to travel a great deal, they have a broader repertoire, and, to an extent, they put emphasis on the technical aspects of music rather than making a personal mark on it. In the past, conductors tended to spend a majority of their time with the same orchestra, and they worked together on standard repertory as well as on unusual pieces. The result was that the orchestra began to have a style and sound of playing that went with the conductor.

"This identification is what one gets from a broad repertory, rather than from a selective one. Eventually, conductors may end up with musical specialties, but they do so not at a young age but in their sixties and seventies. I think that's because as you get older you tend to concentrate on the music you love, that means the most to you. But whatever kind of music is involved, the way a conductor can make it significant is by staying and playing with the same musicians."

The musicians Gerard Schwarz stays and plays with most these days are the more than ninety members of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, with whom he spends twenty-two weeks a year. He became Principal Conductor in Seattle in 1984, following the death of the symphony's director, Rainer Miedel, and has undertaken to expand its repertory and activities. "It's a fabulous orchestra," he enthuses, "and the audience is very responsive. We have all sorts of series: new music, Baroque, chamber music, Mozart, Beethoven, and a 'popular classics' series—by which we mean works like *Scheherazade* and the *1812 Overture.* We play in four different halls located in different parts of town. Our new-music series is in a hall that seats 450, our popular classics are in the opera house, which holds 3,100. In all the halls, we're a near sellout.

Schwarz and the Seattle have embarked upon an ambitious recording schedule with the Delos label, for which the conductor already has made numerous recordings with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Mostly Mozart Orchestra, and the Y Chamber Symphony, among others. Schwarz's newest Delos compact discs with the Seattle Symphony encompass such large-scale works as Stravinsky's complete *Firebird* (D/CD 3051) and a set of Wagnerian excerpts (D/CD 3040); Prokofiev's two *Romeo and Juliet* Suites are scheduled for release at the end of the year (D/CD 3050). By now an experienced recording artist, Schwarz has become a vocal enthusiast for compact discs, not only because of their sound but because of their capacity to hold over an hour of music. "All of our compact discs for Delos run between sixty-five and

seventy-three minutes," he says. "It's getting so that I feel cheated if a record is anything less!"

If Seattle—where he also conducts one opera a season for the enterprising Seattle Opera Company—provides Schwarz with a West Coast base, he has taken care to remain a major figure in the New York mainstream through his activities at the 92nd Street YM-YWHA and at the annual Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall.

As Music Director of Mostly Mozart since 1984, Schwarz does more than conduct the majority of concerts during the seven-week season; he plans the programs, selects most of the performers, and supervises the overall shaping of the season. He has been doing this since 1982, when he was named Music Advisor and was engaged with the specific purpose of rejuvenating and revitalizing a festival that some regarded as having fallen into an unimaginative and predictable routine. With the Mostly Mozart Orchestra, Schwarz has two recent Delos compact discs: Bach and Handel arias, with soprano Arleen Augér (D/CD 3026), and the Mozart Clarinet Concerto, K. 622, and Quintet, K. 581, featuring David Shifrin (D/CD 3020).

Always on the lookout, he says, for excellent works by lesser-known composers, as well as lesser-known works by the great composers, Schwarz has a passion for venturesome—and innovative—programming. This season's Mostly Mozart fête reflects that passion. It opens on July 7 with a "Mozart in Paris" program; that is, music composed by Mozart during his six-month stay in the French capital at the age of twenty-two. Included are the *Petits Riens* ballet music, K. 299b; the Flute and Harp Concerto in C Major, K. 299; the concert aria *Popoli di Tessaglia,* K. 316; and the *Paris* Symphony, No. 31 in D Major, K. 297. Schwarz feels that the program is particularly appropriate since it comes a few days after the July 4 celebration of the centenary of France's presentation of the Statue of Liberty to the United States; it is also the opening concert in Lincoln Center's ten-day "France Salutes New York" festival. (The "Mozart in Paris" program actually premieres at Washington's Kennedy Center on the opening night of the festival's annual visit to that city, June 25-28.)

A novelty programmed for later in the season will be the first Mostly Mozart performance of the opera *La finta giardiniera,* written when the composer was eighteen—not to mention the first festival presentations of the Masonic Funeral Music, K. 477 (conducted by Edo de Waart), and the *Credo* Mass, K. 257 (conducted by Robert Shaw).

"One of the problems at Mostly Mozart—as everywhere—is persuading the guest conductors to take on pieces new to them," Schwarz observes. "Guest conductors always like to do familiar pieces, and so do guest soloists. Most pianists are like that—they all know the same pieces and are reluctant to learn anything new. One of the most difficult things about being a music

director anywhere is programming for the guests."

Schwarz, who is possessed of an inquisitive mind, has been called by one critic "a tireless quester after the unexamined." His off-the-beaten-track excursions in recent years have ranged from the U.S. premiere of Richard Wagner's early opera *Das Liebesverbot,* which he gave at the Waterloo Festival, to contemporary pieces by Pulitzer Prize winners Ellen Taaffe Zwilich and George Perle, among others, that he has presented in the "Music Today" series he directs at Merkin Hall. (Schwarz's recording of an album of Perle works on Nonesuch 79108 was nominated for a 1985 Grammy Award.)

Regarding his selection of contemporary pieces, he has explained: "I receive many, many scores. It is usually a difficult decision—and often I choose composers whose works are familiar to me. However, sometimes I encounter something that's fresh and wonderful and written by someone whose work I don't know."

Probably the best reflection of Schwarz's interest in new music and unusual repertoire are his concerts with the Y Chamber Symphony, which this fall opens its tenth anniversary season (1986–87 also marks the Y's fiftieth season of the performing arts). After what a *New York Times* notice on December 25, 1976, termed a "trial run"—of which critic Joseph Horowitz said, "The performances held all the promise of a distinctive and valuable addition to the city's musical life"—Schwarz took charge of this predominantly youthful orchestra upon its founding in 1977, shortly after launching his own conducting career. He quickly turned it into one of the most creative and daring musical organizations in New York.

With this orchestra Schwarz has conducted a great deal of contemporary music and has been responsible for numerous premieres, including nearly twenty commissioned works. But he has by no means ignored the standard repertory, such as the Bach *Brandenburgs* and the Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven staples. Indeed, somewhat representative of the eclectic nature of Schwarz's programming at the Y will be Nonesuch Records' September release of Kurt Weill songs (79131, in all formats), sung by soprano Teresa Stratas with the Chamber Symphony.

While most of the symphony's concerts are held in its Kaufmann Concert Hall, such is the interest in the orchestra that it occasionally ventures forth to Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls. A recent rehearsal at the elegant, mahogany-paneled Kaufmann Hall afforded an opportunity to witness Schwarz in action, preparing a typically challenging Y Chamber program made up of the world premiere of Hugo Weisgall's *Tekiatot* (subtitled *The Shofar Sounds: Ritual for Rosh Ha-shana),* Frank Martin's *Six Monologues from "Jedermann,"* Carl Reinecke's Flute Concerto in D Major, and—just to touch on more familiar ground—Beethoven's First Symphony.

Even though much of the program was devoted to modern and rarely played works, Schwarz followed the practice, rare among today's conductors, of splitting the violins; that is, seating the firsts to his left and the seconds to his right. "I think all music sounds better with split violins, including modern pieces," he believes. "A mixed sound is best, with not all the violins on one side. The only times I won't use separated violins is when the composer makes that request."

Naturally, much rehearsal time was devoted to Weisgall's new piece, closely textured music far from easy to execute. The composer himself was seated halfway back in the empty hall, listening intently and turning the pages of the score. Occasionally Schwarz paused and looked back at him with a question about tempo, but for the most part he played whole sections without interruption.

"That was the practice of old-time conductors like Stokowski and Horenstein," he explained afterward. "In rehearsal they liked to play music from start to finish. They rarely stopped; they felt that the musicians were more comfortable playing straight through. Nowadays conductors tend to stop more and, as a result, performances don't hold together as they should—musicians go from moment to moment. This applies also to new music, if not more so. The problem in conducting new music is that we worry about every nuance, so we don't give the musicians a chance to feel comfortable with the piece as a whole."

Asked whether he minded having a composer present when he prepared a new work, he grinned and said: "No, I like having them there—but not to talk too much."

Then, enlarging upon his rehearsal techniques, he remarked: "It's too bad that conductors today seldom use descriptive adjectives in talking about music. They say loud or soft or fast or slow. The older generation used more imagery and imagination. Instead of saying something technical like 'It's too loud; the notes are too long; play it softer and shorter,' I like to say something like 'Please play it lighter.' That's not much of a technical term, but it tells what you're getting at."

Gerard Schwarz, who, very likely, is the most accomplished musician ever to have been born in Weehawken, New Jersey, began taking piano lessons at the age of five at the behest of his Vienna-born parents, a surgeon and a psychiatrist. (Although Schwarz hasn't touched the trumpet in several years, he still gets a bit of musical relaxation by playing the piano.) Two years later, having heard the brasses in the Triumphal Scene of Verdi's *Aida*—in the movie version with Sophia Loren acting and Renata Tebaldi singing the title role—he decided that the trumpet was what he wanted to play. He took lessons with William Vacchiano, then principal trumpet of the New York Philharmonic, attended New York's High School of the Performing Arts and the Juilliard School, and at age eighteen joined the

American Brass Quintet.

Actually, Schwarz started conducting even while he was still an active trumpeter, beginning with the Erick Hawkins Dance Company and going on to other ensembles. He is not the first trumpeter to have moved onto the podium, having been preceded by Saul Caston (principal trumpet and later Assistant Conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and then for many years conductor of the Denver Symphony), but he made the changeover with remarkable smoothness and speed. Following three years as co-principal trumpet of the Philharmonic, he became director of the Waterloo Music Festival in 1977 and of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in 1979, succeeding Neville Marriner there.

Schwarz's work with the Los Angeles ensemble has produced many admired Angel and Nonesuch recordings. Notable among recent releases by Nonesuch is an album of Victor Herbert music for strings (79107). Such recordings have helped make Schwarz a national figure; they have also given him a reputation, not completely to his liking, as a chamber-orchestra specialist. "The size of the orchestra isn't important," he says. "What's important is which orchestra." Obviously one of the reasons he is so happy in Seattle is that he now has the opportunity to expand his repertory in the area of large-scale works.

Always known as a quick study, with a remarkable ability to absorb scores and to master complex music, Schwarz finds himself relishing his new challenges. "I do a lot of Mahler now," he points out. "I've always felt a great identity with his music—both of my parents are Viennese—but coming to grips with his major symphonies has taken me time. However, I just did the Mahler Ninth, and it was a breakthrough for me. I felt a freedom that had been denied to me in my earlier performances of his works. You know, you can't just do it by studying; you have to do it by conducting."

Notwithstanding his great interest in new music, the conductor says that he feels a strong identity with the basic repertory. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that there are a few areas in which he is not particularly at home. "I feel no great identity with the English composers—Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Britten, Tippett," he says, "though I'm not saying they're not wonderful composers. I also have little affinity for the thorny serial music of the fifties and sixties, so I generally don't program those works—or I ask our guest conductors to do them."

Considering the rapidity of his rise as a conductor, there are those who think that Seattle may not be Gerry Schwarz's final port of call among America's orchestras. When the question of his ultimate goal is put to him, he responds frankly but not without a certain element of caginess.

"Everyone wants to rise to the top of his profession," he admits. "As a musician, one's ultimate goal is to be involved with great music on as high a level as possible. We also want to have

an impact, an influence on our community.

"Making music on the highest level requires a good orchestra, a good attitude, and a genuine love for music itself. You have to put it all together. The question for a conductor always is: 'How far can this orchestra grow, and how far can I grow with it?' Now, I'm more interested in building something that's great rather than just being given something that's great. I suppose every conductor dreams of Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia. But right now I want to be where I am."

The Magnificent Keyboards of Colonial Williamsburg

by Martha Hamilton-Phillips
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For some fifty years Colonial Williamsburg, America's premier reconstructed eighteenth-century city, has charmed its visitors with a variety of musical delights—in summer and all year round. Strolling balladeers—playing violin, guitar, flute, or mandolin—serenade nightly in the quaint taverns, while several times a week an authentic Fife and Drum Corps parades the town's unpaved streets and its greens. In the Music Teacher's Room of a two-story red-brick house once owned by Mary Stith, daughter of a late-eighteenth century president of nearby William and Mary College, Williamsburg music teachers, and their students, give recitals. On select evenings the Governor's Palace ballroom, the Capitol, and the Bruton Parish Church are aglow with candlelight concerts of eighteenth-century favorites. And one can step into the workshops of Williamsburg craftsmen and watch them hand-carve violins, lutes, and other period instruments using colonial methods and tools. Williamsburg's latest musical attraction is its distinguished collection of antique musical instruments housed, since last summer, in the new DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Gallery.

Designed by Kevin Roche, whose creations include the American Wing of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the St. Louis Gateway Arch, the gallery is interior architecture (its outside walls, almost five hundred feet long, are only unadorned brick). It is entered, dramatically, through Williamsburg's recently reconstructed Public Hospital, which dates from 1773. With two levels of exhibition space of about 26,000 square feet each, the gallery was funded by the late DeWitt and Lila Acheson Wallace, co-founders of *Reader's Digest*. It contains one of America's foremost collections of eighteenth-century decorative arts: some eight thousand objects including British and American furniture, ceramics, glass, metalwork, textiles, scientific instruments, paintings, and prints—and, notably, a multitude of fine musical instruments. Initially assembled to furnish period rooms in Wiliamsburg's historic buildings, the instruments are precisely the types originally imported by Virginians in the late eighteenth century. Recitals and demonstrations using them will enhance the town's already rich performance and music-education programs.

John Davis, Curator of Collections, supervised the installation so that the historic significance of the instruments serves to complement visitors' experiences in the surrounding Historic Area of Williamsburg. The instruments receive pride of place in the well-lighted

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Martha Hamilton-Phillips is Contributing Arts Editor of *Ovation*. Copyright 1986 by Classical Music Publications, Ltd. Used with permission.

galleries and are amply supplemented by informative labels, auxiliary paintings and prints, and contemporary sheet music and documents.

Focal point of the gallery is a sky-lit central court—a dramatic, airy garden setting articulated by white columns, trellises, and greenery elegantly suitable for receptions and eighteenth-century "occasional" music. Flanking the main staircase within the court, and displayed on slightly elevated, open platforms, are two of the most remarkable of a bevy of keyboard instruments. One of them, a double-manual harpsichord made by Jacob Kirckman in London in 1762, is among three Kirckmans used or currently being restored for authentic performances of period music. Although they were expensive to import to colonial Virginia, Kirckman harpsichords were purchased by such Williamsburg residents as well-to-do planter and Governor's Council member Robert Carter III (1728–1804) in the 1760s and 1770s.

On its platform opposite the Kirckman stands a grand pianoforte made by John Broadwood and Sons of London in 1806. It is described by Mr. Davis as "wonderfully full and resolute, without any compromise of period mechanical noise—there is no clanking or clicking. It is an incredibly exciting instrument." Broadwood, initially a harpsichord maker, switched to the pianoforte as the instrument's popularity increased. English grand pianofortes were being produced from the later 1770s, as musical compositions took increasing advantage of their capabilities to play softly (*piano*) as well as loudly (*forte*). As demand increased, John Broadwood and rival firms such as Longman & Broderip exported instruments such as this one to America and India. Recreating a context for this notable instrument, John Davis's installation includes sheet music composed in 1806 by T.E. Hook for pianoforte performances in London's Vauxhall Gardens and an early Georgian "conversation piece" painting by Gawen Hamilton.

Smaller keyboards, set chronologically in a glass-enclosed case running the courtyard's length, begin with an English harpsichord spinet made by John Woolfinden after 1730. Akin to earlier compact Italian harpsichords, the English spinet developed a trapezoidal shape with the keyboard set at an angle to the case. Smaller and less expensive than the concert harpsichord, the spinet was avidly imported by colonials; in fact, the first harpsichords made in America were really spinets built in Boston by English emigrés such as John Harris. A high standard of quality was set by English models like the gallery's Stephen Keene spinet, a superb London instrument of ca. 1700, with a fine walnut case on a contemporary turned-leg trestle.

Next to the DeWitt-Wallace's spinet stands one of the earliest surviving English square pianofortes, made by the German emigré Johannes Zumpe shortly after he began building keyboards in London during the 1760s. Zumpe had adapted a pianoforte invented ca. 1705 by Bartolomeo Cristofori, Keeper of Instruments for the Medici collection in

Florence, and improved on by Gottfried Silbermann, an organ maker in Freiberg, near Dresden, Germany. Zumpe's square pianoforte became fashionable in Georgian London, where it was popularized by Johann Christian (the "English") Bach; he actually gave the first solo concert performance on a pianoforte, in 1768, playing a Zumpe instrument like the gallery's. Although these instruments had the small soundboard and light frames of the clavichord and therefore lacked power, their expressive and delicate range of tone appealed to English ears, and by the 1770s these square pianofortes were being imported and copied in the American colonies.

Other notable English keyboards on display in the gallery include a square pianoforte probably made by Thomas Culliford for Longman & Broderip in London ca. 1778–82; a barrel organ made by Longman, Clementi & Co. dating from ca. 1798–1801; and a "cottage upright" pianoforte made by Collard (formerly Clementi, Collard & Collard) possibly as late as 1830–34.

A short distance across the courtyard—and not to be overlooked—is another long wall case displaying a very decorative selection of stringed instruments. There are sixteenth- through eighteenth-century violins and violas from Milan, Brescia, and Mantua; eighteenth-century cases and bows, together with violins from workshops in London and Salisbury; and instruction books and prints published in England and typical of those imported in America. In particular, the gallery offers a selection of instruments of the kind purchased by colonial Virginians: English guitars made by Michael Rauche and J.N. Preston between 1764 and 1770; a violoncello by Peter Wamsley of London from ca. 1730–50; an early-eighteenth-century Viennese horn; a mid-century French *vielle à roue* (hurdy-gurdy); and flutes made in London by William Henry Potter and Richard Potter.

By the late eighteenth century, the now politically independent Americans supported a richly varied musical culture. Printed music as well as good instruments were in great demand, as was music instruction. Gentleman amateurs such as Thomas Jefferson, who played the violin, performed in public, often as patrons filling out orchestras for both concerts and popular theatrical performances. Jefferson accumulated a large music library and sought the advice of English music historian Dr. Charles Burney when commissioning a harpsichord for his daughter, Patsy. George Washington purchased a Longman & Broderip harpsichord for his wife's granddaughter in 1793. Professional musicians taught not only instrumental and vocal music, but also dancing—and sometimes fencing.

Williamsburg's best-known resident professional musician in the eighteenth century was Peter Pelham, who resided there for more than fifty years. An organist who moved from Boston around 1750, he not only taught organ and harpsichord, but also repaired instruments, conducted performances for

theater companies, composed, arranged, and performed music for public occasions, and served as musical director for concerts in which he usually performed. During the American Revolution he was Williamsburg's Keeper of the Public Gaol. The tradition of fine musical performance in colonial Williamsburg is today carried on by Pelham's modern counterpart, music historian and longtime organist and choirmaster of Bruton Parish Church, J.S. Darling.

Musical programs for the DeWitt Wallace Gallery are being expanded, and Curator Davis indicates that in addition to recitals in the gallery's modern auditorium and spacious central courtyard, master classes—as well as recordings—are planned. Scheduled to be released late this year by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a first album of eighteenth-century music, performed using the Kirckman and Broadwood keyboards as well as a Nathaniel Cross violin and a Richard Potter flute. Among the composers represented on the album will be Vivaldi, Handel, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, and Carl Friedrich Abel. For further details, write the Foundation, c/o Audio-Visual Department, Williamsburg, VA 23185; or call (804) 229-1000.

Lowell Mason: The Modest Music Master

by William E. Studwell
The American Organist
July 1986

There is no doubt that Lowell Mason (1792–1872) is one of the leading figures in American music history. Clear testimony to this is the significant biographical coverage given in such reference works as *The Dictionary of American Biography,*[1] *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,*[2] *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography,*[3] and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*[4] Further substantiation of his historical role can be inferred from the several books dealing with him.[5] All these publications and others relate his many contributions to American music education, music compilation and publication, and hymn composition.

Yet in the midst of this praise there has been some negative criticism of one sector of his accomplishments, namely, hymn writing. *The Dictionary of American Biography,* probably the leading publication in its field, expresses such negativism directly and succinctly:

> "Mason was not a great composer."[6] The author of this comment is not simply comparing him to such renowned classical masters as Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, whose work strongly influenced Mason and whose work was frequently adapted into tunes by Mason.[7] The implication is that Mason was not even great within his own genre, hymn writing. Another writer, the late hymnologist Erik Routley, while giving Mason more credit than the previous author, also describes Mason's tunes as inferior:
>
> > The hymn tunes of Mason are of cardinal importance in the history of American hymnody; if their musical content is often lower than we now think desirable for our own hymn singing, it is worth remembering that Mason's object was deliberately to write his music in a restrained fashion in order to counteract the prevailing tendency to wild extravagance and sentimental vanity which was abroad in American church music of the time.[8]

A surface examination of Mason's hymns would tend to reinforce this opinion. According to one count, he wrote about 1,126 original tunes.[9] Most of his tunes are no longer used, but one of the leading contemporary hymn collections, *The Methodist Hymnal,* has printed nine of his tunes as well as several arrangements.[10] Three of Mason's enduring melodies are "Olivet" *(My faith looks up to thee),* "Missionary Hymn" *(From*

William E. Studwell is the author of *Christmas Carols: A Reference Guide,* published in 1985 by Garland Publishing Inc. Copyright 1986 by the American Guild of Organists. Used with permission.

Greenland's icy mountains), and "Bethany" *(Nearer, my God, to thee).* These three are good tunes, but alone are certainly not sufficient to establish Mason as an exceptional composer.

The impression of Mason's mediocrity begins to dissolve somewhat when one investigates the significance of the statement in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* "It is impossible to compile a complete list of his work in any category, for Mason published many of his compositions unsigned."[11] (One example of his tendency toward anonymity was his first collection of hymn tunes, published in 1822, which was issued as the work of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston rather than as his own.[12]) To carry this thought further, if some of the unsigned, unattributed tunes were outstanding and/or famous ones, Mason's reputation would be transported a lot closer toward superiority.

All that may be needed to make such an augmentation of fame is to examine more closely two of Mason's "arrangements." The 1824 tune "Hamburg," used for the very well-known hymn *When I survey the wondrous cross,* was according to Mason arranged from a Gregorian chant.[13] However, two pieces of information tend to support Mason as the original composer of this melody. The first is his above-mentioned inclination not to credit himself as the source of tunes. The second is the style of the music. The tune is very similar to many other nineteenth-century melodies and has little resemblance to a medieval chant, even taking into account the alterations made by modern arrangement. As a contrast to "Hamburg," note that the tune "Veni Emmanuel," used for *O come, O come, Emmanuel,* is an adaptation of possibly twelfth- or thirteenth-century plainsong which was made about thirty years after Mason's "arrangement."[14] But "Veni Emmanuel" closely resembles medieval chants, while "Hamburg" is far removed. Therefore, one is very strongly tempted to believe that Mason was indeed the composer of this famous hymn. Not surprisingly, the same respected source that above reported Mason's claim that the tune was only an arrangement indicates in two places that Mason is the composer.[15]

An even more renowned hymn is the great Christmas carol *Joy to the world.* The music that accompanies the fine lyrics by Isaac Watts was allegedly arranged by Mason from music by George Frideric Handel. The "arrangement" was published in an 1839 collection, *The Modern Psalmist,* edited by Mason, and carried the notation "from Handel."[16] Although there are some similarities between some parts of the tune and some parts of *Messiah,*[17] modern scholarship has shown fairly convincingly that Handel was not the composer of the tune.[18] Again, one is strongly led toward the conclusion that Mason was the originator of the melody. And because there are two such incidents, suspiciously similar, the probability of Masonian authorship for both tunes increases.

These two occurrences, in addition,

are far from unique. For example, the best-known tune for the Christmas carol *Away in a manger* has been attributed to Martin Luther because, when the tune was first published in 1887, it was accompanied by the statement "Luther's Cradle Hymn, composed by Martin Luther for his children."[19] But the compiler of the 1887 collection, James Ramsey Murray, has been determined to be the composer of the tune.[20] This incident was a close mimicking of Mason's pattern of disguise. And although Luther was not the source of the music for *Away in a manger,* he is, like in the three previous cases, the probable composer of the originally unattributed tune for his Christmas hymn *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her,*[21] as well as for some other anonymous tunes published with his hymn lyrics.[22]

With *When I survey the wondrous cross* and *Joy to the world* probably in Mason's dossier, the traditional view of Mason's hymn writing must be altered upward. Instead of assigning him to mediocrity, we perhaps should elevate him to the status of a leading American hymn tune composer.

Notes

1. *The Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner, [1946?]-), Vols. 11-12, pp. 371-72.

2. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: J.T. White, 1891-), Vol. 7, pp. 422-23.

3. *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: Appleton, 1894-1900), Vol. 4, pp. 247-48.

4. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 11, pp. 748-50.

5. Ibid., p. 750.

6. *The Dictionary of American Biography,* Vols. 11-12, p. 372.

7. Ibid.; *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography,* Vol. 7, p. 422.

8. Quoted in *Companion to the Hymnal: A Handbook to the 1964 Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 612.

9. Ibid., p. 613; a recent article on Mason claims "some 1,700 hymn tunes" (Porter, Ellen Jane Lorenz, "A hymn-tune detective stalks Lowell Mason," *Journal of Church Music,* Nov. 1982, p. 7).

10. *The Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1966).

11. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Vol. 11, p. 749.

12. *The Dictionary of American Biography,* Vols. 11-12, p. 371.

13. *Companion to the Hymnal,* p. 431.

14. Ibid., p. 305; Studwell, William E., *Christmas Carols: A Reference Guide* (New York: Garland, 1985), p. 211.

15. *Companion to the Hymnal,* pp. 431 and 613.

16. Ibid., p. 260.

17. See, for example, Porter, p. 9.

18. Haeussler, Armin, *The Story of Our Hymns* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1952), p. 180; Simon, Henry W., *Christmas Songs and Carols* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955), p. 147; see

also Studwell, p. 118, and Studwell, William E., "From Handel: The Story of *Joy to the World!*," to be published in *Journal of Church Music.*

19. *Companion to the Hymnal,* pp. 108–109; Studwell, *Christmas Carols,* pp. 23–24.

20. Ibid.

21. Studwell, William E., "Vom Himmel Hoch: Christmas Carol of the Reformation," *Journal of Church Music,* Dec. 1983, p. 8.

22. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Vol. 11, p. 366.

Liszt Rhapsodies

by Donn Teal
Ovation
August 1986

Piano virtuoso Clara Schumann had a closed mind about the works of Franz Liszt: "I can only call his compositions terrible, a chaos of excruciating dissonances. I could almost detest him as a composer." Britain's inimitable George Bernard Shaw saw Liszt as "a child, delighting in noise . . . indulging in such irritating excesses and repetitions of them." Austrian music critic Eduard Hanslick found in his works "false, bogus music characterized by tangible symptoms of decay." Liszt's last great love, the Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, insisted: "People do not yet understand him, and to a far lesser degree than Wagner"—she believed that Liszt had "hurled his lance much farther into the future. A number of generations," she asserted, "will pass before he is fully understood." It did not take so long as that: In 1920, composer-piano virtuoso Ferruccio Busoni wrote, "In the last analysis we are all descended from Liszt, not excluding Wagner, and we owe to him whatever inferior things we have been able to achieve. César Franck, Richard Strauss, Debussy, the recent Russian school—all are branches of his tree."

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Described more agreeably by Shaw in a *Pall Mall Gazette* obituary as having "attracted everybody worth knowing in the nineteenth century," the much-maligned but often overpraised pianist-composer died of pneumonia in Bayreuth on July 31, 1886, at almost seventy-five. Liszt has, in fact, attracted a great many people worth knowing in our own century. As its centenary commemoration of the Hungarian virtuoso's passing, *Ovation* offers—from among these—the thoughts of six eminent interpreters of his piano music.*

Claudio Arrau

"Every creator, in one way or another, reflects the period in which he lives—and genius even more so. Genius also looks ahead. The more endowed a composer is, the more free and innovative he becomes. Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner are the great Romantic 'Faust figures' of their time. 'Faust figures' dare more than most, and want to obtain the unobtainable; hence the endless struggles and also the great achievements.

For me the greatest Liszt works are the *Faust* Symphony and the B Minor Sonata. Observed from the spiritual point of view, the Liszt Sonata sums up everything in the piano literature that came before, and makes a new statement reflecting Liszt's time and being. In it he conjures up the archetypes of

*These quotations are excerpted from Ronald Taylor's 1986 biography, *Franz Liszt: The Man and the Musician.*

Faust, Gretchen, Mephistopheles, and the eternal longing of love, making it the Romantic piano sonata *in excelsis*—just as the Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy* are the great Romantic examples in the orchestral literature.

Any pianist approaching the Liszt literature, to be able to interpret the music authentically, must have a tremendous dynamic range and a sovereign mastery of the keyboard. Martin Krause, my teacher in Berlin from the age of ten to fifteen (at which time he died), always used to say that Liszt demanded more technique than one actually needed, so that the performance looked and sounded as if without effort. An important requirement, too, is emotional expansiveness of expression, with a great dramatic sense and prolonged tension. Necessary also, at times, is the ability to distort rhythm (without impairing the musical idea) and demonic drive. But perhaps the most important quality necessary is creative imagination. Without this, all the rest is of little use.

Among the greatest interpreters of Liszt's music that I have heard personally were Eugène d'Albert and Ferruccio Busoni. Of d'Albert, I remember the most memorable B Minor Sonata imaginable. His musical declamation embraced every mood, from the sweetest lyricism to the deepest passion: He had the necessary Romantic diction. Busoni I heard play both the Sonata and the *Transcendental* Etudes with the greatest technical vitality. His rhythm was electrifying, and he had all the imagination and sweep necessary.

In the major works the pianist cannot deviate from Liszt's printed score at all, and very little elsewhere. Liszt made several versions of his most important works—he experimented, working and reworking tirelessly to find the final, 'right' versions. He had a final vision in view and, having arrived at it, we must respect it completely. Liszt had the sound of the piano in his very bones. He knew its resources, knew every nuance that he wanted and every lyrical feeling that he desired to express—and how to achieve them. It would be foolhardy for anyone to think that he could improve upon these."

[Claudio Arrau has an extensive catalog of Liszt recordings on the Philips label. A recent release on compact disc is the Chilean-born pianist's interpretation of all twelve *Transcendental* Etudes; forthcoming CD releases include the Liszt B Minor Sonata and the Concertos Nos. 1 and 2.]

Jorge Bolet

"We have been going through a number of years when so many of those whom I call the 'purists' have rather looked down on Liszt and everything he wrote as second-rate music. And I think that it's a wonderful thing that we are celebrating the hundredth anniversary of his death. I hope that the listening public is changing its mind and not paying attention, any longer, to the 'purists.' I believe that nearly everything Liszt wrote is very pianistic. I don't think that he ever wrote anything, either, that was

awkward as far as the mechanics of playing are concerned. Of course his music is difficult, very difficult. But I find the music of Liszt very beautiful, very rewarding, very satisfying to play.

I love a great many of the transcriptions. A transcription like the 'Spinning Song' from *The Flying Dutchman* is, I think, an absolute masterpiece of piano writing and of transcribing the character and spirit of Wagner. Liszt's transcription of the *Tannhäuser* Overture, as another example, is on a grand scale, although it can never be made to equal the orchestral version. But, always, Liszt was able to capture the basic character of whatever he was transcribing. Many times, of course, he added a lot of his own ideas. But it's an interesting point that, in all the transcriptions that Liszt did—of operatic scenes, of the Schubert *lieder,* of the Schumann *lieder*—he never altered one single note of any melodic line. He may have enlarged and embroidered accompanying figures—he certainly enriched the harmonic progressions. But melodically he stayed absolutely faithful to the original composer.

It always amazes me when people and critics comment with some surprise on the poetry and the lyricism that they claim to notice in my performances of music by Liszt. I can't understand why it should be a surprise to anyone, because Liszt was a very intensely religious man. Therefore, so much of his music is lyrical, poetic, and it has a religious quality. Unfortunately, many performances of Liszt in the last thirty-five or forty years have emphasized the pyrotechnics and the virtuoso elements—the mechanical display of very fast octave passages and all those things which, yes, are in Liszt's music. I don't believe in emphasizing these elements at the expense of other elements that are so much more musical.

Through long years of study and experience, I have found that Liszt in performance requires a totally unique style. You cannot play him the way you play Schumann or the way you play Chopin. For Liszt's music you must, naturally, study the score very carefully, you must master the mechanics of simply playing the notes. And then—well, then you are in a position to be able to play the music very freely. By 'very freely' I mean not hesitating in the slightest to change dynamics, tempi, or whatever. We know that Liszt was very free with everybody else's music in performance. If that was his attitude toward what others had written, he certainly must have been doubly free with works of his own. I like to feel that whenever I am playing Liszt, I am playing something that I wrote myself. I am completely free, I don't hesitate in the slightest to alter things, because I know that it's very much in the nature of the music."

[Jorge Bolet performed Liszt works at Washington, D.C.'s, Smithsonian Institution and Kennedy Center during the Liszt Centennial Celebration in June. He will play Liszt with the Oakland Symphony in September, and appears at New York's Carnegie Hall in January 1987 in the composer's Concerto No. 2 and *Hungarian Fantasy,* Julius Rudel

conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's. A series of Bolet's Liszt recordings for London Records includes the recent Volume Six of the solo piano music, as well as an album featuring the *Totentanz* and *Malédiction*; the *Transcendental* Etudes will be released this autumn.]

Misha Dichter

"People look at me in disbelief when I refer to Franz Liszt as a neglected composer, but I do believe that, relative to his monumental contribution to music, he remains just that. My experience has shown that those people who dismiss him as the trivial Romantic *poseur* are usually familiar with only his First Piano Concerto, the Second *Hungarian Rhapsody,* and maybe *Liebestraum.* I have found an astounding lack of respect for Liszt's music even among conservatory students. How often in the course of giving a master class have I seen young pianists who carefully heed every dotted-thirty-second rest in a Beethoven sonata casually shorten measures, blur the pedal through counterpoint, accelerate and retard at will, and commit countless sins against Liszt's music simply because of a foggy idea of what Romantic pianism is all about!

The broad range of Liszt's output is staggering to all who bother to research it. At a crucial time in the history of music, Liszt was creating the tone poem as a compositional form, popularizing symphonic and operatic music through miraculous transcriptions (however, when I play the *Rákóczy* March, people invariably ask me when Liszt transcribed the Berlioz work, which it predates by several years!), writing what history would only later call Impressionistic music, championing the music of his contemporaries, leading Wagner into atonality—and in his late works going beyond even Wagner into experimental writing that leaves many twentieth-century composers sounding dated. He was experimenting with keys based on the interval of the fourth while Brahms and Tchaikovsky were writing their symphonies.

I suppose that one of the problems causing misunderstanding in this great composer's work is the emphasis on the purely technical aspect of his keyboard writing. It is very easy to say, 'Forget all the notes and get to the music,' but this is not so easily accomplished in Liszt. I fear that a great part of the problem is that, by the very nature of the pianistic difficulties, his music perhaps attracts a flashier sort of performer who would put pyrotechnics above substance. However, it seems to me one of the ironies of pianism that sheer technique and musicianship are considered contradictory forces, and in few other composers' works do the technical problems meet the musical ones so forcefully. The *Hammerklavier* Sonata of Beethoven comes immediately to mind when I think of the scope of the Liszt B Minor Sonata, but why does the feeling still persist among so many students, concertgoers, and writers that one should approach the Beethoven work with sacred dignity, and the Liszt work with empty-headed bravura?

So here we are, the enlightened listeners of the end of the twentieth century, still unfamiliar with the bulk of Liszt's output (when did you last hear the *Faust* Symphony in concert?), still stunned by the prophetic vision of his late works. Perhaps this year, the hundredth anniversary of his death, more people will awaken from this musical blindness and embrace his music with the attention it deserves."

[Misha Dichter with his wife, Cipa, performed Liszt's Concerto *Pathétique* recently at the Ravinia Festival, and he will close the Aspen Festival this year with Liszt's Concerto No. 1, Sir Charles Mackerras conducting. The pianist has made several Liszt recordings for Philips, including performances of the two concertos with André Previn and the Pittsburgh Symphony; a boxed set of the complete *Hungarian Rhapsodies* is due for release in early 1987.]

François-René Duchable

"At a very young age I experienced what I must call the revelation of Franz Liszt's music. It was at a concert at which György Cziffra played the *Hungarian Fantasy*. My career as a pianist was already marked out, but, hearing this dazzling interpretation, I could not imagine that one day I might be able to approach the work. Cziffra played, afterward, as an encore, the Sixth Rhapsody—and with such élan that I remember having almost danced in my seat!

It was again through Cziffra, on disc this time, that I was to be astounded at the variety of timbres of Liszt's piano works and made spellbound by the composer's orchestral sonorities. At thirteen, I was working on my first piece by Liszt: the *Campanella*. For its technical difficulties I was fully rewarded by my satisfaction in obtaining, myself, all the sounds from that of the shrillest handbell to those of gongs as deep-voiced as Liberty Bells. Also as an adolescent, I experienced and fell in love with the tone poems, the oratorios, and the two symphonies, which with their harmonic language and their cyclical form evoked for me César Franck, just as their orchestration recalled Wagner—two of my favorite composers.

Recently, I've begun to delve into the immense bulk of the Liszt paraphrases. Beyond their prodigious variety, the introduction they offer to a vast repertoire, and their value as testimonials to the works that inspired them, the paraphrases interest me for other reasons: the researching and selection, first, of those works that will be used in my recital programs and, second, the adaptation afterward of the works for the modern piano—whose resonance is such that, in my opinion, it is necessary to rebalance the low notes in relation to the high, sometimes even modifying the text.

Regarding the pianistic technique needed for playing Liszt, I believe that the principal problem, in such works, for example, as the *Transcendental* Etudes, the *Mephisto Waltz*, certain paraphrases, and most emphatically the B Minor Sonata, is one of muscular power. It is indispensable that the Liszt

interpreter have a reserve of power sufficient to dominate the piano perfectly, rather than be dominated by it.

As for Liszt interpretation, there is often in him (as, later, in Mahler) an alternation of passages that are rapid, very dense, almost overloaded, with other passages that are almost naked and where one must maintain that simplicity without slowing down the tempo. Generally in Liszt (and in Chopin, too) I believe that one must avoid too quick changes of tempo, in order to preserve the shape and structure of the music. I attach a great importance to the 'architecture' in music, and I believe that the great difficulty in playing the major works of Liszt lies in 'rebuilding' the works, each time I play them. In any case, never do I lose sight of the fact that the music of Franz Liszt is the magnificent arch joining the Classical music of the eighteenth century to the music of our time."

[François-René Duchable will make his New York debut on October 18, closing a Liszt Festival at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. The young Frenchman's Liszt recordings, on Erato/RCA, include an album of the B Minor Sonata with the two *St. Francis* pieces, as well as one in which he performs the two concertos with James Conlon and the London Philharmonic. Scheduled for January 1987 release is a world-premiere recording, the Liszt piano/viola transcription of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy,* with violist Gérard Caussé.]

Charles Rosen

"There were many composers before Liszt who wrote with a specific sound in mind, but none in which this realization in sound is more important than the text behind it. In this respect Liszt is more radical, more 'modern,' than Chopin. Beautifully sensitive to the character of his musical material, and deeply indifferent to its quality, all Liszt's genius is turned onto the realization in sound.

The 1838 version of his youthful *Paganini* Etudes must have been the result of hundreds of performances, thousands of hours of improvisation. Why should he have written new etudes? The invention of material was never his strong point; one suspects that as he developed new effects of realization, he created material to fit and show them off. Liszt is perhaps the first composer of instrumental music whose music is conceived absolutely for public performance. That is why there are so many different versions of the same piece: Each successive version is itself a new performance.

The only forms of music in which composition and realization are identical are improvisation and electronic music; sound and conception coincide absolutely here. In jazz improvisation, as in Liszt's *Paganini* Etudes, there is a text behind the sound, a tune given in advance; but in listening to one of Art Tatum's recorded performances, it makes almost no difference who wrote the musical text behind the realization—Cole Porter, Fats Waller, Rube Bloom. What counts is the 'paraphrase.' In

bringing composition and realization closer together, Liszt made it possible to give qualities of sound—resonance, texture, contrasts of register—an importance that they had never had before in composition. Tone color is even more important in his music than in that of Berlioz, and his combinations of invented sound are often as astonishing as those in electronic music.

Liszt's feeling for sound was the greatest of any keyboard composer's between Scarlatti and Debussy, and he surpassed them in boldness. Critics often write as if Liszt's innovations in piano technique were only ways of playing lots of notes in a short space of time, instead of inventions of sound.

What Liszt's technical innovations enabled him to achieve were not only new kinds of piano sound, but layers of contrasting sound. His arrangement of Schubert's *Der Lindenbaum,* for example, in the last stanza plays the theme in the right hand in octaves above and below a steady, delicate trill, which gives a continuously vibrant sonority, while the left hand imitates a pizzicato bass and, at the same time, realizes Schubert's simple flowing accompaniment as if it were performed by a trio of French horns. This is, one must confess, rather an awful thing to do to a Schubert song, but it would be churlish to refuse one's admiration for the grandeur and richness of the conception—or for the pianist who can play it and make it sound as vulgarly beautiful as it was intended. To comprehend Liszt's greatness one needs a suspension of distaste, a momentary renunciation of musical scruples."

[Charles Rosen, whose renown as a pianist is matched by his distinction as an author and lecturer (his *The Classical Style* won the National Book and the ASCAP Deems Taylor Awards), performs an all-Liszt program at Columbia University on November 1 as the beginning of a tour of U.S. colleges. Of his recordings for CBS, his Liszt Concerto No. 1, with John Pritchard and the New Philharmonia, is now available on the Odyssey label.]

Earl Wild

"On the yardstick of overall talent, Franz Liszt outmeasured all of his contemporaries. His vision was boundless, traversing a vast area too—due to his longevity—that was not permitted composers such as Chopin, Schubert, and Schumann. The flowering of Liszt's ideas in the music of Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler, years after his death, attests to that vision and genius. Most critics of Liszt, in their efforts to be interesting writers, indulge the public's voracious appetite for news of the great man's personal life rather than discussing the skeletal but prophetic short pieces he wrote in his last years—in which he provided a base for most music that followed.

When I look at portraits of the serene face of the aged Liszt, I think of his many struggles with the bourgeois Germans and his efforts with the art-imperious French. It is with relief that I think of him in Rome, where he be-

longed and where he became devoid of all care and need for pretense, fortified by an inner spirituality and a personal knowledge of his worth. He moved amidst the Vatican decor like a sign.ficant figure in a vast opera production. Finally, I think of the many plots and cabals that surrounded Liszt's musical life. In today's artistic world it is easy to detect the same intrigues—uncompromisingly secular—with politics and money representing the major ingredients in the forging of a career.

Today it is interesting to note that the turning away from the Schoenberg school by many composers is directly parallel with the refuting of most Freudian principles. Liszt represented life and nature in art. The death wish that has been projected by much of our present day 'trendy' music is in reality only a black hole!"

[Earl Wild, as part of the Liszt centennial year, has performed a three-program all-Liszt series—with the composer seen as "Poet," "Transcriber," and "Virtuoso"—in New York, London, Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The complete recording of the series is planned for release on the Etcetera label. Wild also has an extensive catalog of Liszt recordings on Vanguard. A recital at New York's 92nd Street Y will present him in more Liszt works in early 1987.]

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Charm me asleep BRM 28723
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Do you hear what I hear? BRM 28722
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The little drummer boy BRM 28721
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And I saw a new heaven BRM 28732
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Popular music lead sheets, no. 19 (1986)
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One alone
Say you, say me
Stranger in paradise
To the morning

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